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SOCIAL REACTIONS OF BUDDHISM IN MEDIEVAL JAPAN

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BUDDHISM, when it found its way from the Asiatic continent into Japan for the first time in the sixth century, had already undergone an evolution of one thousand years since the time of its founder, and thenceforth continued to come to Japan, with further changes, for about seven hundred years. All or nearly all of the Buddhism received here, therefore, was not Buddha's teaching in its original form, but its later development that called itself the Mahâyâna, or the Great Vehicle. The Mahâyâna Buddhism, coming, as it did, through India, Gandhara, Turkestan, China, and Korea, in the course of its long career, had incorporated into itself beliefs and ideas extremely diverse in origin and quality. They, in fact, comprised the whole extent of the religious experience of man, from cults and rites derived largely from primitive beliefs of different races, at one end of the development, to a salvation through faith in a single Buddha, at another end, and also to a union of the individual with a cosmic life attainable through independent spiritual effort. Out of this rich storehouse, the Japanese society, during the more than thirteen centuries after the sixth, has made, in accordance with the changing needs of the succeeding ages, a remarkable series of progressive selections and adaptations of Buddhist ideas.

It is my belief that, in the study of the religious history of any people, its doctrinal, institutional, and cultural phases should be supplemented by an inquiry into another aspect of vital importance, namely, the progressive mutual reaction that may be discovered between these conventional factors and the complex and ever-changing social life of the nation. It is the social conditions in a broad sense, rather than any other single element,

that adapt the doctrine, fashion the institutions, and determine the general forms of the artistic expressions, of a national religion, which may persist till further changes are wrought under altered conditions. And the value of this social point of view is demonstrated in a striking fashion in the history of the manner in which the various phases of the Mahâyâna Buddhism and the shifting religious needs of society have successively reacted upon each other in Japan. It is the purpose of this brief paper to select out of this long evolution in adaptation the period that lies between the advent of the religion and the introduction of the last phases of its newer forms, covering the seven centuries from the sixth to the thirteenth, and to attempt a few broad suggestions culled from independent research concerning some of the larger social reactions of Buddhism in this period.

I

Let us first observe the state of society in the middle of the sixth century, for it was the society that confronted Buddhism when it was transmitted from Korea. Economically, the Japan of that early age may be considered as belonging to the agricultural stage of a southern type: pastoral life was unknown, and the chief industry was the rice culture, which required an intensive method of cultivation, and consequently involved the private possession of rice-land, whether by the individual or by the family. Iron had long been in use, a fact which indicated a considerable diversity of crafts and small industries and the existence of guilds besides family organizations. The family seemed still to retain traces of a previous condition in matriarchy, especially in the relation between the sexes and in succession; the family had, however, in fact not only advanced to the patriarchal stage, but had already had recourse to artificial means in order to perpetuate the semblance of the tribal organization which the controlling section of the society was outgrowing. The head of the nation was the emperor, who was upheld as the direct descendant of the ancestral deities of the ruling tribe, and who in that capacity solicited their divine protection in behalf of the good harvest of the land and tranquillity among the people.

In such a community, it was to be expected that the individual should be, as he was, so bound by rigid custom and by his status in the family and society, as to be still ignorant of the comparative freedom of personal conduct of a later age and of the moral responsibility which that freedom would entail upon him. His point of view was, therefore, still non-moral, in the sense that his conduct and career were not to any appreciable extent within his moral control and responsibility. Being non-moral, he was liable, when social restraint was for any reason relaxed and when his own interest came into conflict with that of another, to descend to what may from a later standpoint be deemed as a ruthless opportunism — a characteristic feature in all ages in which the selfish interest of man is still uncontrolled save by custom.

Accordingly, the religion of the Japanese before the introduction of Buddhism consisted of miscellaneous beliefs and rites regarding ghosts and spirits of a non-moral type. The main characteristics of religions of this stage are so common and so well known in different parts of the world that they need not be enumerated. In the Japan of the sixth century, the greatest peculiarity about her innumerable deities was that chief among them were the ancestral spirits of the ruling house and tribe, and were, in consequence, of large political importance; the imperial house sought to insure its security, as well by inculcating beliefs in these deities among the people and invoking their divine aid for the peace and the agricultural welfare of the realm, as by more purely political means. It was natural that, being born of a society so clearly before the awakening of ~~this~~^{the} individual moral sense of its members, most of their deities should, as they did, possess but vague personal characters, prayers addressed to them should lack intensity of feeling, the ideas of sin be material and largely accidental, and the religious acts be almost wholly ritual or magical in nature.

With this native cult, the essential character of Buddhism, which was formally introduced from a Korean Court into the Japanese in 552, stood in the sharpest possible contrast. Buddhism, as such, was to the last degree moral; that is, its scheme of salvation was built upon the conduct of the individual as the sole responsible maker of his own destiny. Again, Buddhism, as

such, denied the existence of either soul, ghost, or deity. It is true that the Mahâyâna Buddhism that came to Japan had, during its long progression through Asia, embraced a large number of deities, but it treated them as convenient popular manifestations of the universal Law; and the Law, in its philosophical aspects, was the essence of the purest pantheism that Indian thought had evolved. What manner of reaction upon such a high religion must one expect from the non-moral beliefs in deities of the ancient Japanese with which it now came in contact? Was there a likelihood of their comprehending the new doctrine so immeasurably beyond their stage of culture? Would they not rather be liable to regard Buddhist deities as so many real agents for good or ill fortune superadded to their own deities and more potent than the latter, instead of mere instruments of truth as the new deities were taught to be? Would not the people at once proceed to invoke their aid, as they had been wont to invoke that of their ancestral gods, for the sake of the non-spiritual, material blessings that they sought?

II

Such was precisely the manner in which Buddhism was treated by the Japanese during the first half of our period, and the history of this unspiritual manner is in itself a notable evolution. Confining our attention for the present to the period ending with the close of the eighth century, we are compelled to admit that Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, devas, and other Buddhist deities were conceived by the Japanese as so many real, not apparent, gods; that their beneficent intervention was asked chiefly for welfare on earth; that all the religious acts of the new order, such as the copying and reciting of sutras, the making of images, the building of temples, and the taking of the tonsure, were generally regarded as meritorious offerings or investments looking for tangible returns in the world. Neither the motives for the retirement, nor the main reasons for the personal influence, of the greater priests of the age, can be said to have been spiritual in character. The old religious attitude of the people was not only not altered radically, but was, on the contrary, reinforced and intensified by the reception of so many novel and powerful deities; not only were

the deities multiplied, but the former religious habits of the Japanese mind were stimulated into new vigor, the old beliefs and rites deepened, and ancient gods raised to the level of the new. Hence it was that the people could observe no essential difference between the old gods thus revived and the numerous alien spirits they had now adopted, and that usually the same person served both with equal devotion. The deities, in fact, were seldom conceived to be exclusive of each other; although it was not yet commonly taught that Buddhist deities were reincarnated in the *kami*, the former were eagerly accepted as welcome additions to the latter that brought a double measure of security for the welfare of the emperor and of the people.

Moreover, with its inspiring religious art, Buddhism served as great medium of the culture of East Asia which the Japanese Court at that time was adopting with fervor. The rise in central Japan of Buddhist temples of simple and dignified architectural beauty, containing magnificent and wholly novel works of sculpture and decorative art, carried with it an irresistible appeal to the senses of the people, and charmed them to the conviction of the excellence of the new faith.

Under so markedly hedonistic and sensual a conception of Buddhism, what was more natural than that its followers in Japan remained insensible to nearly all the higher aspects of its great message? Not only was the universal Law in its true import hidden from their view, but also was the peculiar altruism of the Bodhisattva vehicle repeated only mechanically and at rare intervals. Even an idea so fundamental to all forms of Buddhism as that of *karma* gained as yet little hold on the mind, and the authorities were clearly opposed to its propagation. Had Buddha or even Nagarjuna risen from his grave, he could hardly have recognized Buddhism in what passed under that name in the Japan of the eighth century but taught few of the central ideas animating the wonderfully figurative language of the Mahâyâna literature.

Nothing more clearly embodied the general attitude of the age toward the religion than the policy which the Japanese government had adopted in regard to the Buddhist church. After a varied experience of a century and a half, the authorities in the eighth

century had ended in assigning to the church a large and distinct place in the new state-system which they had organized. In this new polity, there were, between the emperor at the apex and the unfree people at the base, two main classes of citizens, namely, the noble and the free, the former constituting the governing and the latter the producing and supporting divisions of the nation. The Buddhist temples together with Shinto institutions formed a third estate, whose functions were, not so much to spread religious beliefs among the people, as to perform services that should secure the welfare of the emperor and the State. With this end in view, the Buddhist church was organized in a loose hierarchy and given a degree of self-government in the administration of its affairs. Not only was it thought incompatible with the clearly defined duties of the church to the State that it should teach the karmic philosophy or induce people to renounce the vanities of the world, but also were these acts, essentially Buddhistic as they were, condemned by law as subversive of social order. For similar reasons, the priests and nuns were ordained and registered in accordance with law, and no private ordination was allowed. In order that the church should perform its duties with undivided zeal, the temples that were officially recognized were supported with grants of land and exempted from taxation, and, in consequence, were forbidden to acquire more land or to engage in other economic pursuits. In short, the Buddhist church was, from the official standpoint of the eighth century, an indispensable organ in the performance of the life of the new State, the function of the church to invoke the good will of the deities for public welfare being coördinate with the function of the nobility to govern the people and that of the free citizens to supply the means of government.

III

As we pass on to the Buddhism that prevailed among the nobility of Kyōto between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, we find ourselves moving in an atmosphere still largely non-moral, but at the same time discover here certain subtle influences at work that gradually prepared the way for a less hedonistic and more spiritual form of Buddhism to rise toward the end of this period.

Before we describe these delicate changes, it is again necessary to make a brief survey of the social life of the nobles at Kyōto; for in Kyōto, the metropolis, was centered the peculiar culture of the bureaucratic Japan, and only under the influence of this culture could the Buddhism of this period become what it was.

One of the notable features of aristocratic life at Kyōto, and, in consequence, of the whole culture of the Court, was the markedly feminine feeling that characterized thought and action. Not only was the noble lady influential in all society, but the noble lord also was deeply affected by her tendency to delight in beauty that appealed to the senses, to dwell rather on the manner than on the matter regarding questions of culture, and to think and act in terms of sentiment and personality. We cannot tarry here to seek an explanation of this condition, nor even to describe any of the far-reaching effects that it exerted upon the culture of the period; it will suffice merely to refer to the existence of this state of things in the background of the Buddhistic life of this singular age.

The life of the noble was circumscribed by status and by inflexible rules and conventions of social behavior, which he could defy only at the risk of his career. But his society was not only narrow and rigid, but also capricious, for the conduct of its affairs was largely determined by the changing moods of persons whose self-interest was uncontrolled by inner discipline or fixed principles. However high his native ability, therefore, the individual person was in no small measure the plaything of external forces, personal or otherwise, which were beyond his moral control and responsibility. Having acquired little freedom or desire to win his career by his own effort, his success in life usually depended on the social prestige of his family and on the patronage of some influential person. Failing these, the best that the individual could do was to adjust his interest to that of the fickle society and drift along the line of least resistance. If by good luck he succeeded in acquiring power, he was not seldom liable to wield it without scruple; for, having, as he did, little spiritual control or moral strength, what was there to curb his selfishness but his regard for the general disapproval of inelegant manners?

Indeed, what more or less tended to rob this non-moral life of

the extreme coarseness that would otherwise have characterized it was: the modal culture of a high aesthetic type that had been evolved in Kyōto in an atmosphere of peace and comfort; and a sense of ready human sympathy ^{as} in a good manner, a feature even more clearly feminine in character than the general culture of which it was a mark. The sanction of culture and propriety was, however, external, and hardly of value at a critical moment; nor at any time could it make demands upon a person which in a more spirited age would bring his moral nature to the test. As for the effect upon his normal life, whether in its daily routine or in its occasional social diversions, it is evident that such a sanction could rarely serve to quicken the moral tone uniformly so dull.

Under the cumulative influence of generations, therefore, it would seem but natural that the noble should, as he did, emerge from this period without an adequate spiritual force to meet the loss of his wealth and power with which he was threatened, as we shall see, by the strong feudal warrior.

Returning now to the state of Buddhism that prevailed among the Court nobility, it will be noted that the system of maintaining officially recognized temples and an officially ordained clergy still remained in force and for the same public purposes as in the eighth century. What is even more important, the same non-moral point of view respecting Buddhism and the same tendency to regard its deities as agents of fortune, not only persisted, but were much intensified by the more engrossing desire for personal welfare and the increased fear of ghosts which an enervating court life had engendered. It is a matter of great interest, however, that at the same time, subtler influences had crept in that in some cases imperceptibly but in all instances surely changed the nature of the Buddhism that was favored. To some of these changes we shall now briefly refer, beginning with those which came earlier and were more visible than others.

Side by side with the treatment of the church as an official mediator between the State and the deities, there had naturally grown up a custom among the nobles, gaining in popularity throughout this period, of founding and endowing private temples and monasteries for the sake of the personal welfare of the donors. And the very conception of the welfare to be secured had under-

gone an important extension; in addition to the old notions of the blessings to be enjoyed on earth, the new idea included, as its chief factors, the extinction of the sinful *karma* of a former life causing the woes of the present, and the repose or the salvation of the soul after death. This, of course, implied motives for deeper devotion as well as for the increase of religious institutions. Simultaneously, the enlarged idea of the blessing under Buddhist tutelage tended greatly to stimulate the sense of dependence upon deities, or, in other words, to make their supposed intervention in one's affairs both during lifetime and after death not only more general but also more intimately pervasive. And this general tendency grew parallel with the influence of one special sect of Buddhism, namely, the Shingon; for, however profound its philosophy in pantheistic mysticism, the Shingon was to all appearance characterized by its systematically wrought pantheon of innumerable deities and its bewilderingly elaborate ritualism. Nor did the clever priestcraft of the sect desist from nurturing the habit among the laity of regarding the deities as so many real agents of miraculous power and of fancying that an implicit reliance on the efficacy of the rich paraphernalia of ritualism constituted the very substance of religious devotion. And the influence of this formalistic Shingon was asserted in an exhaustive fashion through its great temples in possession of immense material wealth and its great priests wielding tremendous social power, that typified and lent color to the general religious life of the age. In fact, the mystic beliefs and rituals of this form of Buddhism were so successfully exploited and so closely interwoven into the life of the nobility as to form almost its integral part. On all occasions of birth, death, disease, and other ills of private life, and of drought, storm, famine, pestilence, and other public calamities, as well as many happy events, appropriate rites were performed and deities invoked by the ubiquitous Shingon priest. It was thus that the Court Buddhism of this period became, in character, at once aristocratic, formal, and priestly.

Underneath the luxuriant growth of the mystic ritualism of Shingon, however, there rose an understanding of Buddhism, at first almost unnoticed, but gradually visible and finally general, which was at once deeper and more serious. Now at length was

discernible an increasing assimilation of the Buddhist doctrine of the transitoriness of life and of the karmic view of the world, not as embodied in forms and institutions, but as a habit of mind of the believer. We should suppose that the more reflective souls had been led to this deeper understanding by their observation, among other things, of the vicissitudes of human fortune that were so often enacted before them at Court among aspirants for power; the occasional natural calamities in the country, also, may have aided the reflective mood, for they were always liable in that agricultural age to unsettle the whole economic life of the nation, causing misery to the peasantry and embarrassment to the nobility. Whatever the explanation, the tendency once begun spread with remarkable persistency among the aristocratic circles at Kyōto. And characteristically of the period, the current conception of *karma* and of the unreliability of the world was, for the most part, negative and resigned. Men looked more to the past as an antecedent of the present than to the present as the creating cause of the future; they habitually referred to probable sins committed in a forgotten past life and their evil *karma*, not so much in order to set about expiating the past or to rebel against the blind yoke of the past for which the present could not be held responsible, as in order to reconcile themselves to the woes of the moment as they occurred. The new understanding was, therefore, altogether a partial and feeble conception of the intensely moral teaching of Buddha, but must none the less be considered as more serious in nature than any idea that any large group of Japanese had ever entertained of Buddhism. And these soberly passive ideas slowly but surely entered into the feeling of the noble circles with increasing depth, till they had at the end of this period become the very texture of the graceful literature of Kyōto so delicately sad in tone.

Thus we find the Japanese Buddhism in the eleventh century aristocratic in spirit, ritualistic in form, and in mood passively resigned. The ideal religious life remained, as might be expected, monastic; that is, attainable only by the renunciation of social ties and by retirement. The laity usually depended on the priest for complete requisite forms of worship, but in their mundane life could take refuge in the thought of their fleeting lives and pre-

ordained destinies, and of the possible ultimate rest or salvation of their souls after death and of the souls of their deceased kin to be secured by devotion and munificence to Buddhist institutions during life. The Buddhism of the eleventh century may, therefore, be said to have become a little less hedonistic and a little more spiritual in character than it was three hundred years before, though passive and still not a little non-moral. At least Buddhism had been more assimilated to the culture and entered more intimately into the life of the class that fostered it, than might be said of the religion in its own surroundings in the eighth century.

IV

While these gentle changes were slowly taking place in the Buddhism of the leisured classes at the metropolis, a tremendous social upheaval was in progress in the country at large that finally resulted in a complete undermining of the polity organized in the seventh century and in the firm establishment of a new class of society, — a class which was largely private and illegal in origin, but had arrogated to itself one after another all the public functions of state. This new class was feudal, and the feudal lords were the practical rulers of the Japanese nation after the end of the twelfth century.

With these men of arms we find ourselves in a new world of thought and feeling, with a point of view and spiritual needs radically at variance with those of the genteel courtiers at Kyōto. The "man that handled the bow and arrow," as the warrior styled himself, was habitually animated by a strong sense of honor which was based upon valor and loyalty and which was enforced by a rigorous social sanction. In his community, society did not touch the individual in a manner which was, as at the Court of Kyōto, dull and capricious, but, on the contrary, called directly upon the keenest sense of his personal honor to be defended and asserted at the point of the sword. For the first time in Japanese social history, it may be said, the individual found his fame and fate in a large measure dependent upon his character and action, or, in other words, within his responsibility and moral control. Moreover, his calling required in the warrior a state of constant

readiness for the taking and giving of life, — a fact which compelled him to regard death as a continual presence and to view life as a serious business to be dealt with soberly and courageously.

It would seem clear that the ritualistic, passive, and monastic tenets of Buddhism that had fascinated the civil nobility could hardly satisfy the spiritual demands of men so uncultured, yet so profoundly earnest and so strongly moral in their social sanction. Only a Buddhism that was based upon the pure monism of the Mahâyâna, and therefore simple and clear in its doctrine and encouraging and bright in its promise of salvation or enlightenment, making a direct appeal to his bare, unlettered human nature, might be expected ultimately to win the heart of the *samurai*.

Before the feudal society finally found a form of Buddhism that met these demands satisfactorily, a temporary haven was found in another doctrine, until later it was largely replaced by the more effective teaching and abandoned to the non-feudal classes of people. This transitional Buddhism of the *samurai* was mainly the Zhōdo doctrine; it taught the reception of the soul after death into the perpetually blissful paradise of the West by virtue of faith reposed while on earth in the saving power of the Buddha Amita. Without touching on many problems that arise in relation to the nature of the history of this doctrine in Japan, we shall be content with the following brief observations concerning its place in the social history of Japanese Buddhism.

In this school of Buddhism, the idea of the transitory and karmic world formed as important a religious motive as in some of the beliefs current among the Court nobles. In the application of the idea, however, the emphasis had shifted from a passive consideration of the present as the karmic results of an unknown past to an earnest solicitude as to the future destiny of the soul. Salvation after death was, in fact, the sole, ardent prayer of the true Amitaist. Whatever the past, the present must embody its *karma*, and by present faith and surrender must the past *karma* be extinguished and the future of the soul be saved. Simple as this change from the earlier view might seem, it was little short of a complete alteration of the religious centre of gravity, so to speak, and indicated the rise of a much simpler and purer faith than had obtained before. And it is clear that the change was in

a large measure due to the great fact that the problem of life and death constantly stared the warrior in the face. It was but a normal course of events in his life of warfare that he should take others' lives and himself be abruptly taken away from his comrades and kin, and it was but natural that he should, as he did, awake some day to a sense of sin and repentance and a desire for future salvation with a characteristic militant ardor which would have surprised the Kyōto noble.

Simple and direct as the new scheme of salvation seemed, however, it was a salvation promised beyond the grave. During his lifetime the devotee was taught to find the repose of his mind in a full assurance of the saving virtue of his faith in a transcendental Buddha, or, if a pure and sustained faith was impossible in his activity as a warrior, to retire from society and devote his remaining days to a monastic life. These features of the Zhōdo Buddhism, so briefly enumerated here, suggest reasons as to why it was found at once acceptable as a temporary shelter for the *samurai* but ultimately unsatisfactory as a solution of problems raised by the exacting spiritual demands of an age of strife. A monastic life was utterly incompatible with the intensely worldly activity of the warrior, nor could the promised peace of mind in secular life be attained, even with the purest faith in his capacity, amid the sanguine warfare that was his vocation. The warrior in full activity needed a philosophy more robust and radical that should deliver his mind from darkness and fear on earth and during life, raise him above all concern of life and death, impel him to a positive, creative activity in the heart of the strenuous life raging about him, and, if possible, give him not only an undaunted courage but also a perfect freedom and control of his body and mind, enabling him to meet with readiness whatever confronted him. When the warrior became conscious of these needs, he was also aware that the Zhōdo doctrine could hardly satisfy them all, and found in another form of Buddhism ready at hand a discipline which responded to his moral needs and at the same time became strengthened by an intimate contact with his sterner characteristics. This was the Zen Buddhism. From the end of the twelfth century, therefore, the warrior turned more and more to Zen, as time advanced, and left Zhōdo more and more to the

peace-loving peasantry, — the peasantry whose social status was later to rise considerably and whose Zhōdo was accordingly destined to grow in influence. We must now leave the peasant class with its Zhōdo, and turn to the warrior and Zen.

V

It is needless to inquire into the history of the *dhyana* or *zen* school of Buddhist thought, for we are concerned with the social reactions of Buddhism, not its doctrinal aspects. We shall, for our purpose, regard Zen rather as a method of spiritual training than as a system of philosophy. It is, however, necessary to remark that the whole philosophical basis of this training was the universal Way or Law, or truth, of the Mahâyâna Buddhism asserted without compromise or admixture. The Way was in free operation at all times and in all places, and "existed in all men, each holding it in a perfect state;" it was his "Buddha-nature," independent of his birth and death. It was, however, obscured in man before his enlightenment; the enlightenment consisted in dispelling the common illusions of self that fettered and blinded men, and in restoring their "original features" and regaining the freedom of the Way operating through themselves. The object was, therefore, not an accumulation of knowledge or of merit, nor a dependence on a transcendental deity, but a purely independent effort of the disciple to penetrate beneath the bed-rock of his ego until the pure spring of the free Ego should gush forth.

For this high consummation, the method that Zen required was of utmost boldness and rigor. In the earlier stages of the training, the common method in use was as follows. Taking a posture of the body calculated to enable the mind to operate with the greatest possible energy and intensity, its entire powers were focussed upon the solution of a series of problems propounded by the master. These problems, as, for example, "the sound of one hand," "I prior to the birth of my parents," "A puppy possesses no Buddha-nature," and the like, may be characterized as epitomizing in various degrees of depth the illusory contradictions of the world. Nor was the solution of any problem attainable by the ordinary intellectual processes of reasoning or intuition, but by no less than

the forcing of one's being, so to speak, into the heart of one problem after another through a concentrated effort of all his mental strength, and the conquering of the seeming contradiction of the problem by a virtual enacting of its mystery in his mind. And the method was possible only with a tremendous determination to stake one's life and death on its issue.

One effect that the warrior received from a rigorous, protracted training in Zen, was a great capacity for the concentration, control, and direction of his physical and mental resources. The spirit of boldness and free control developed by the training entered into the life and all the martial arts of the warrior after the thirteenth century, as deeply as the passive sense of *karma* entertained by the Court nobles of the eleventh had influenced their sentiment and literature.

Valuable for the warrior as were the qualities of concentration and control, a far greater gift was in store for a chosen few among the militant pupils of Zen. For, it is said, if the discipline was persisted in for a sufficiently long period, a sudden "enlightenment" would supervene, in which one's "body and mind would of themselves fall off, and his 'original features' be revealed." He would be completely lifted above life and death, for he would have attained the eternal, universal Mind and found his personal place therein. Moreover, the enlightened warrior, having entered the free operation of the Way, would gain a degree of freedom and ease and the celerity of vision and action that would enable him to meet whatever sudden crisis confronted him. An agent free and identified with the active principle of the world, he would stand in the heart of the moving life and become a centre of positive, creative activity in society. Buddhism would seem at last to have become a purely active motive power; the positive element of Buddha's teaching so long obscured by its negative aspects would seem to have reached through Zen the utmost degree of masculine, free, and creative spiritual energy. The growth of Mahâyâna in a warlike age, with all its characteristics and limitations, could hardly have been purer or more complete.

Of the three great problems of feudal life, — the attitude regarding life and death, the business and art of warfare, and the ethical principles of honor and loyalty, — it will be seen that Zen

met the first two with an effectiveness immeasurably greater than that of the Zhōdo Buddhism. As for the third, namely, the loyalty and honor of the warrior, Buddhism, from its intrinsic nature, never throughout the feudal ages seemed capable of establishing an organic relation with them. These principles were adequately enforced by a strong social sanction, and then after 1600 certain aspects of Confucianism proved of readier service in the inculcation of the principles than any form of Buddhism had been.

We have been concerned primarily with the social reactions of Buddhism in relation to the ruling classes in the successive periods of Japanese history between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries. All the more important phases of the Mahâyâna Buddhism may be said to have come or been imparted to Japan by 1250. Henceforth, one may note, among other things, an increasing influence of Zen upon the warrior along the lines already indicated. Likewise, there followed a gradual permeation, through literature, landscape painting, decorative art, tea ceremony, and many details of the daily life of all classes, into the very habit of mind of the Japanese race relative to man and Nature, of the Zen ideal of culture, — an ideal which may perhaps be defined as: the perfect control of concentrated energy, and the simplest expression of deepest study and meaning. It, however, falls beyond the scope of the present essay to trace these and other far-reaching influences of Buddhism upon the national life of Japan after the thirteenth century.

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